

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE  
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# W9a

August 19, 2004

TO: Commissioners and Interested Persons

FROM: Charles Lester, Deputy Director  
Diane Landry, District Manager  
Susan Craig, Coastal Planner

**SUBJECT: CITY OF SANTA CRUZ: LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM MAJOR AMENDMENT NO. 1-04.** For public hearing and Commission action at its meeting of September 8, 2004, to be held in Eureka at the Eureka Public Marina, 1 Marina Way, Eureka, CA 95501.

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## SYNOPSIS

The City of Santa Cruz is proposing to amend the Land Use Plan and the Implementation Plan (Zoning Ordinance) to allow greater residential densities for one-bedroom and studio units in the RL (Multiple Residence – Low Density) and RM (Multiple Residence – Medium Density) zoning districts. The amendment also proposes to reduce the open space requirements for one-bedroom and studio units in the RM zoning district only.

### **SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff has reviewed the proposed amendment to the Land Use Plan for conformance with the Coastal Act and the Implementation Plan amendments for consistency with the proposed amended Land Use Plan. Issues raised by the proposed amendments include water, sewer, and traffic/parking impacts. As discussed in detail below, Staff recommends **approval** of the City of Santa Cruz Local Coastal Program proposed Land Use Plan/Implementation Plan Major Amendment #1-04, as submitted.

### **ANALYSIS CRITERIA**

The Commission certified the City of Santa Cruz's Land Use Plan in July 1981. The Implementation Plan was certified in April 1985 and the City assumed coastal development permit authority that year. The City has organized and submitted this LCP amendment request in accordance with the standards for amendments to certified LCPs (Coastal Act Sections 30512(c), 30512.2, 30513, and 30514, and California Code of Regulations 13551 through 13553).

The proposed amendment affects the LUP and IP components of the City of Santa Cruz LCP. The standard of review for land use plan amendments is that they must be consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The standard of review for implementation amendments is that they must be consistent with and adequate to carry out the policies of the certified coastal land use plan.



California Coastal Commission

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information on the submittal may be obtained from Susan Craig at the Central Coast District Office of the Coastal Commission at 725 Front Street, Suite 300, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 427-4863.

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## I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION: MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Staff recommends adoption of the following resolutions:

### **Resolution I. (Resolution to approve City of Santa Cruz Land Use Plan Major Amendment #1-04 as submitted)**

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the motion below. Passage of this motion will result in certification of the land use plan amendment as submitted and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion to certify as submitted passes only upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the appointed Commissioners.

***Motion:*** *I move that the Commission certify Major Amendment #1-04 to the City of Santa Cruz Land Use Plan as submitted.*

***Resolution to approve land use plan amendment as submitted:*** *The Commission hereby certifies Major Amendment #1-04 to the City of Santa Cruz Land Use Plan as submitted and adopts the findings set forth below on the grounds that the amended land use plan will meet the requirements of and be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. Certification of the land use plan amendment complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because there are no further feasible alternatives and mitigation measures that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts on the environment that will result from certification of the land use plan.*



## **Resolution II. (Resolution to approve City of Santa Cruz Implementation Plan Major Amendment No. 1-04 as submitted)**

Staff recommends a **NO** vote on the motion below. Failure of this motion will result in certification of the Implementation Plan amendment as submitted and the adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

***Motion.*** *I move that the Commission **reject** Major Amendment #1-04 to the City of Santa Cruz Local Coastal Program Implementation Plan as submitted.*

***Resolution to approve.*** *The Commission hereby **certifies** Major Amendment #1-04 to the Implementation Plan of the City of Santa Cruz Local Coastal Program as submitted, and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the Implementation Plan, as submitted, is in conformity with and adequate to carry out the certified Land Use Plan. Certification of the Implementation Plan amendment meets the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act because there are no further feasible alternatives or mitigation measures that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts on the environment that will result from certification of the Implementation Plan amendment.*

## **II. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS**

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

### **A. LUP Amendments**

The following sections of the Coastal Act pertain to the provision of adequate public parking, circulation, water availability, and sewage facilities to serve new development, and state:

***30250a (in part).*** *New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources...*

***Section 30252.*** *The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, and by (6) assuring that the recreational needs of new residents will not overload nearby coastal recreation areas by correlating the amount of development with local park acquisition and development plans with the provision of onsite recreational facilities to serve the new development.*

***Section 30254.*** *New or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to*



*accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted, consistent with the provisions of this division; provided, however, that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Highway 1 in rural areas of the coastal zone remain a scenic two-lane road. Special districts shall not be formed or expanded, except where assessment for, and provision of, the service would not induce new development inconsistent with this division. Where existing or planned public works facilities can accommodate only a limited amount of new development, services to coastal dependent land use, essential public services, and basic industries vital to the economic health of the region, state, or nation, public recreation, commercial recreation and visitor-serving land uses shall not be precluded by other development.*

The City of Santa Cruz is proposing to amend the Land Use Plan to allow greater residential densities for one-bedroom and studio units in the RL (Multiple Residence – Low Density) and RM (Multiple Residence – Medium Density) zoning districts. The purpose of the RL district is to provide for rental and ownership housing opportunities for both multi-family and detached single-family residences. Principally permitted uses include triplexes, fourplexes, and condominium and apartment units. Single-family homes are allowable with an administrative use permit. The allowable density in the RL district currently ranges from 10.1 to 20 dwelling units/acre. The purpose of the RM district is to provide for the development of areas with medium-density residential uses to promote a suitable environment for the lives of families, household groups, and single persons living in the district. All types of multifamily dwellings are allowed as principally permitted uses. New single-family homes require an administrative use permit. The allowable density in the RM district currently ranges from 20.1 to 30 dwelling units per acre.

The City of Santa Cruz's current density regulations include a maximum number of dwelling units per acre, irrespective of size or number of bedrooms in each unit. As a result, the trend has been to build larger units with multiple bedrooms, which offer the most return on investment. To help achieve the City's goal for smaller, more affordable housing units, the City is proposing to amend the Land Use Plan to allow higher densities *only* for studios and one-bedroom units in the multi-family residential land use districts. Coastal Act Section 30604(g) declares that the State Legislature finds it important for the Coastal Commission to encourage the provision of new affordable housing opportunities in the coastal zone. The City's proposed LUP density changes for studios and one-bedroom units are as follows:

- Low-Medium Density Residential (RL) increase from 20 to 27 dwelling units/acre
- Medium Density Residential (RM) increase from 30 to 40 dwelling units/acre

For larger units (greater than one bedroom), the maximum allowable densities would remain 20 du/acre in the RL district and 30 du/acre in the RM district. Please see Exhibit 1 for location of RL and RM districts in the Coastal Zone; please see Exhibit 2 pg. 1 for proposed land use plan amendments.

The rationale for the increased densities is that studio and one-bedroom units typically generate significantly fewer water, sewer, and parking/traffic impacts than larger two or three bedroom units, because fewer people live in these smaller units. This is supported by census data showing that one-bedroom units have an average of 1.5 persons per household, compared to a citywide average of 2.5 persons per household. The City has estimated the water consumption and automobile trip generation for



three-bedroom units versus studio/one-bedroom units (three-bedroom units were chosen for comparison because this is generally the maximum number of bedrooms found in multifamily units). The City estimated water use for a three-bedroom unit at 311 gallons per day (gpd), compared to 149 gpd for a studio/one-bedroom unit. The City traffic engineer estimated that a three-bedroom unit generates approximately 7.5 automobile trips per day, versus 5.5 trips per day for a studio/one-bedroom unit. The following table shows the estimated water use and trip generation for three-bedroom units at the maximum allowable densities in the RL and RM districts, versus the estimated water use and trip generation for studio/one-bedroom units at the maximum densities proposed by the amendment.

	<b>RL District</b>		<b>RM District</b>	
	<b>3-bedroom (20 du/acre)</b>	<b>Studio/1-bedroom (<u>27</u> du/acre)</b>	<b>3-bedroom (30 du/acre)</b>	<b>Studio/1-bedroom (<u>40</u> du/acre)</b>
<b>Gallons/day</b>	6,220	4,023	9,330	5,960
<b>Trips/day</b>	150	148.5	225	220

As shown in the table above, for water use and traffic generation, the proposed increase in density for smaller units will not exceed the impact of three-bedroom units at the maximum allowable existing density. In addition, the RM district currently requires 400 sq. ft. of open space per unit regardless of unit size; the proposed amendment would require only 200 sq. ft. of open space for studio and one-bedroom units (see Exhibit 2, pg. 4), thus reducing the amount of landscape irrigation needs for these smaller units as well (the RL open space requirement would remain 400 sq. ft. of open space regardless of unit size). Similarly, the proposed amendment will not place increased demands on the City's wastewater treatment system, which currently has adequate capacity.

Regarding parking, the City's LCP contains certified parking standards that require a specific number of parking spaces for residential development based on size of the unit (for studio units) or number of bedrooms within the unit. The proposed amendment does not alter these certified parking requirements.

As discussed above, the proposed amendment will not create additional impacts on City infrastructure. Thus the proposed Land Use Plan amendment is consistent with Coastal Act Sections 30250(a), 30252, and 30254 regarding adequate water availability and sewage facilities, as well as protection of public parking and traffic circulation. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the land use plan amendment as submitted.



## B. Implementation Plan (Zoning Ordinance) Amendments

The following City of Santa Cruz LCP policies encourage infill residential development and maximization of residential density in areas having adequate service capabilities, and state:

***Community Design Policy 1.1:*** *Infill and intensify land uses consistent with existing neighborhood or commercial district patterns in developed areas currently served by municipal services.*

***Land Use Policy 2.1.2:*** *Maximize land intensity or densities in areas unconstrained by resources or hazards and having adequate service capabilities.*

The City proposes to amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the minimum required lot area for one-bedroom and studio units in the RL (Multiple Residence – Low Density) district from 2,200 square feet per unit to 1,600 square feet per unit, which is equivalent to an increase in density from 20 units/acre to 27 units per acre (see Exhibit 2, pp. 2-4 for proposed implementation amendments). In the RM (Multiple Residence – Medium Density) district, the amendment would decrease the minimum required lot area for studios and one-bedroom units from 1,450 square feet to 1,100 square feet. This is equivalent to an increase in density from 30 units/acre to 40 units per acre. These proposed changes are consistent with the densities in the amended land use plan, as discussed in Section IIA above.

The Community Design and Land Use policies of the City of Santa Cruz LCP encourage infill development and maximization of density in existing City neighborhoods that have adequate service capabilities. The proposed implementation plan amendment is consistent with the amended land use plan, which will not have an adverse impact on City infrastructure including, including water availability, traffic and parking, and wastewater treatment (see Section IIA above). Therefore, staff recommends approval of the implementation plan amendment as submitted.

## III. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The Coastal Commission's review and development process for Local Coastal Programs and amendments to them has been certified by the Secretary of Resources as being the functional equivalent of the environmental review required by CEQA. Therefore, local governments are not required to undertake environmental analysis on LCP amendments, although the Commission can and does utilize any environmental information that the local government has developed. Approval of the amendments, as submitted, will not have significant environmental effects, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act.

